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FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

Final Rule Announced for Handling of Non-Ambulatory Cattle

On March 14, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced a final rule to amend the federal meat inspection regulations to require a complete ban on the slaughter of cattle that become non-ambulatory disabled after passing initial inspection by Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) inspection program personnel.

This rule amends federal meat inspection regulations to require that all cattle that are non-ambulatory disabled or “downer” cattle, at any time prior to slaughter at an official establishment, including those that become so after passing ante-mortem inspection, to be condemned and properly disposed of according to FSIS regulations. Additionally, the final rule requires that establishments notify inspection program personnel when cattle become non-ambulatory disabled after passing the ante-mortem, or pre-slaughter, inspection.

“President Obama has strongly stated his support for efforts to improve food safety,” said Vilsack. “This rule is designed to enhance consumer confidence and humane handling standards and will provide clear guidance that non-ambulatory cattle will not be allowed to enter the human food supply. It is a step forward for both food safety and the standards for humane treatment of animals.”

Under the final rule, identified cattle will no longer be eligible to proceed to slaughter as “U.S. Suspects.” Instead, FSIS inspectors will tag them as “U.S. Condemned” and prohibit these cattle from proceeding to slaughter. Discontinuing the case-by-case disposition of cattle that become non-ambulatory disabled after ante-mortem inspection will eliminate the time FSIS Public Health Veterinarians spend conducting additional inspections on these animals, thereby increasing the time inspection program personnel can allocate to

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Export Requirement Updates



The Library of Export Requirements has been updated to reflect changes in export requirements for the following:

Canada

Dominica

Japan

Complete information can be found at www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Export_Information/index.asp.

FSIS Constituent Update is prepared by the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs Office (CPAO).

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Final Rule ...

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other inspection activities. With this final rule, these cattle now must be humanely euthanized.

For further information, write to Dr. Daniel Engeljohn, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Policy and Program Development, FSIS, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250, or call (202) 205-0495.

FSIS Posts Fourth Quarterly Report on *Salmonella* Testing

On March 20, FSIS posted to its Web site the fourth quarterly progress report on *Salmonella* testing of selected raw meat and poultry products.

This report provides preliminary data from October to December 2008 on all establishments eligible for *Salmonella* testing that have completed at least two sampling verification sets.

Highlights from the report include:

- FSIS has set as a goal to have 90 percent of all establishments eligible for *Salmonella* testing in Category 1 by 2010. As of September 2008, 81 percent of all establishments were in Category 1.
- 82 percent of broiler slaughter establishments were in Category 1.
- 989 samples were analyzed from broiler establishments with a 7 percent positive rate.

FSIS continues to post monthly, the names of broiler establishments demonstrating variable or inconsistent process control. Turkey establishments are exempt from posting because this product class meets the criteria of at least 90 percent of all establishments being in Category 1 and having no establishments in Category 3.

The complete report is available on FSIS' Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Quarterly_Salmonella_Results/index.asp.

FSIS Posts New Podcasts

Tune in and subscribe to podcasts that offer helpful information to consumers on the selection, handling and preparation of meat and poultry products to reduce the risk of foodborne illness and to establishments on procuring safe and wholesome products.

Meet the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline

Freedom of Information Act - Part 1

This week, the FSIS released podcasts helpful to the everyday consumer and to plant owners and operators.



Check out these new podcasts on the FSIS Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov/news_&_events/Podcasts/index.asp.

Register for FSIS “How To” Workshops for Small and Very Small Plants

The Agency is hosting a series of “how to” workshops to provide practical tools and methods for proper application and compliance.

These outreach workshops will cover various information on Specified Risk Materials (SRMs), developing controls for *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*, establishing effective sanitation practices, developing food defense plans, ensuring humane handling of livestock and conducting product recalls.

Visit www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Outreach_Sessions_SVS_Plants/index.asp to register for a workshop. Individuals may also register by phone at 1-800-336-3747. Pre-registration is not required but it is highly encouraged.

<p>March 27 Denver, Colorado 7:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Holiday Inn Select Cherry Creek 445 South Colorado Boulevard (SRMs)</p>	<p>March 30 Charlottesville, Virginia 1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Holiday Inn Monticello 1200 5th Street S.W. (Developing Controls)</p>
<p>March 25 Chicago, Illinois 1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Holiday Inn & Suites Downtown Chicago 506 West Harrison Street (Food Defense Plans)</p>	

Updates on FSIS Testing for *E. coli* O157:H7

Weekly updates for the Agency’s raw beef *E. coli* sampling program are posted to FSIS’ Web site.

For comparative 2008 and 2009 results, go to www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Ground_Beef_E.Coli_Testing_Results/index.asp.